WE CLAIM:

1(amended). A cuvette control unit for controlling cuvettes by reading a first bar code affixed on said cuvette, said first bar code being comprised of at least one control code located on one of two opposite end portions of said first bar code, and at least one information code located between said opposite end portions, wherein said first bar code encodes a distinct value from among a plurality of possible values, said cuvette control unit comprising:

a first reading means capable of reading said first bar code, the first reading means being operative to read said first bar code and being responsive to at least two different values of at least one said control code at one of said end portions, wherein the first reading means distinguishes among said at least two different kinds when reading the first bar code;

a cuvette identification information producing means responsive to the first reading means, the information producing means providing a cuvette identification code based on the information code and also based on which of said different values of the at least one control code is read by the first reading means when reading said first bar code affixed to said cuvette; and

a memory means for storing cuvette identification information corresponding to said cuvette identification code.

2(amended). The cuvette control unit as set forth in claim 1, wherein said cuvette identification information producing means produces said cuvette identification information from at least one said control code comprising a start code at one of said end portions, in combination with said information code.

3(amended). The cuvette control unit as set forth in claim 1, wherein said cuvette identification information producing means produces said cuvette identification

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information from at least one said control code comprising a stop code at one of said end portions, in combination with said information code.

4(amended). The cuvette control unit as set forth in claim 1, wherein said cuvette identification information producing means produces said cuvette identification information from two said control codes comprising a start code at one of said end portions, a stop code at an other of said end portions, and said information code.

5(amended). The cuvette control unit as set forth in claim 1, wherein said first bar code comprises a start code and a stop code, on opposite ends of two digits consisting of one character of information and one character of inspection code.

6(amended). A cuvette control unit for controlling cuvettes by reading a first bar code affixed on said cuvette and at least a second bar code affixed on a box for carrying a plurality of curettes, said first bar code being comprised of at least one control code located on one of two opposite end portions of said first bar code, and at least one information code located between said opposite end portions, wherein said first bar code encodes a distinct value from among a plurality of possible values, said cuvette control unit comprising:

a first reading means capable of reading said first bar code, the first reading means being operative to read said first bar code and being responsive to at least two different values of at least one said control code at one of said end portions, wherein the first reading means distinguishes among said at least two different kinds when reading the first bar code;

a cuvette identification information producing means responsive to the first reading means, the information producing means providing a cuvette identification code based on the information code and also based on which of said different values of the at

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least one control code is read by the first reading means when reading said first bar code affixed to said cuvette;

a second reading means capable of reading said second bar code, and a cuvette box identification information producing means providing a cuvette box identification code based on the second bar code;

a memory means for storing cuvette identification information corresponding to said cuvette identification code and said box identification code; and,

a storing control means for storing said cuvette identification information in the memory means, wherein the cuvette identification information is correlated in the memory means to the cuvette identification code obtained from said information code combined with said at least one control code, and said cuvette box identification code.

Claim 7 is canceled, without prejudice.

8(new claim).   A method of controlling cuvettes by reading bar codes affixed on said cuvettes, the bar codes representing digits of code, said method comprising:

respectively locating a code to be used for detecting start/stop of said bar code at both ends of said bar code affixed on each said cuvette;

selecting and using at least one code from among a plurality of start/stop codes respectively showing different values, as at least one of the codes at the ends of said bar code, used for detecting start/stop of said bar code;

identifying each said cuvette using a cuvette identification code comprising one of the different values selected for said at least one of the codes used for detecting start/stop of said bar code and also comprising a value of a code located at a portion between said ends of said bar code;

affixing to said cuvette the bar code showing the cuvette identification code; and,

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reading said cuvette identification code and producing cuvette identification information for controlling a plurality of the cuvettes.